

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT A. DUPUY  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL  
BEFORE THE HOUSE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE**

**April 7, 2006**

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman. My name is Robert DuPuy and I am the President and Chief Operating Officer of Major League Baseball. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you and this Committee today.

Major League Baseball understands the concern of this Committee over the lack of full telecast distribution of Washington Nationals' games, because we share that concern. One of the primary responsibilities of Baseball's central offices is to maintain and increase the high level of interest and enthusiasm in our sport. One way we have done that for over half a century is to make large numbers of game telecasts available to our fans, both nationally and locally. Today, we are very proud of how well we serve the television viewing public through a combination of national telecasts, regional telecasts, out-of-market telecasts for displaced fans, and games and highlights streamed on the Internet. Virtually all of our 2,400 games are available in the local markets through a combination of over-the-air, cable and satellite distribution, and increasingly games and highlights are being distributed through new technology platforms such as cell phones, PDA's and other wireless devices.

We would like to see Nationals' telecasts made available to all of their fans, and that was our expectation a year ago when we entered into the television arrangements involving MASN. The MASN agreement resulted from a long and difficult process intended to find the best new home for the Montreal Expos. That team had almost completely lost its local following in Montreal where none or only a handful of games were broadcast. After a long and competitive process, the Commissioner and owners settled on D.C. as the new home for the Expos. However, Major League Baseball's responsibility to grow fan interest applies to all 30 of our teams, and the Commissioner felt strongly that any relocation of the Expos had to be done in a manner that was consistent with the goal of maximizing the viability and popularity of all teams, including the Orioles.

After baseball decided upon Washington as the Expos' new home, Mr. Angelos and I entered into lengthy discussions over the best and fairest way to move the team here, less than 50 miles from Camden Yards. Many of our discussions focused on the Nationals' local telecast rights, and we entered into a deal that we believe was fair for all parties. That deal has been frequently misunderstood and misreported. What the deal does do is provide for a guaranteed market rate annual revenue stream to the Nationals for their local telecast rights, and it was also intended to provide broad distribution of both Nationals' and Orioles' telecasts. For example, rather than carve up the two teams' territories – as could have been done – we chose to distribute both teams across the entire territory, allowing existing Orioles' fans to retain their allegiance and allowing new National League Nationals' fans to emerge from the entire geographical reach.

As you know, a number of our teams have recently created their own regional sports networks, and full distribution of those networks has typically taken some time, as it has here. Mr. Angelos's testimony covers the details of MASN's attempt to reach a distribution deal with Comcast. Let me say that Baseball is disappointed that there is litigation over this matter. We share the frustration of Nationals' fans and the feeling that a business deal should replace the court or administrative fight. While we have not been involved directly in MASN's negotiations, our office has been in contact with both MASN and Comcast to urge them to resolve their differences. We would also note that MASN does have deals in place for Nationals' games with Charter, Cox, DirecTV, Verizon and RCN.

For the benefit of Nationals' fans who are Comcast subscribers, we urge that an agreement quickly be reached for the carriage of Nationals' telecasts.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.